

# PIET MONDRIAN

*the earlier years*

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*Mondrian's later work is well known in the United States. From time to time excellent early examples of his painting have been included in American exhibitions. But the individuality of his later work and our familiarity with it commonly lead us to forget the quality and persistent searchings which marked Mondrian's painting long before he had refined that pictorial idiom which today we at once associate with his name.*

*For these reasons this selection from Mondrian's work has been focused on his evolution between the years 1904 and 1920. A few later canvases are included as reminders of the work with which we are more familiar. But it is through Mondrian's paintings of the earlier years that we can best appreciate those steps by which he found the way to that final, deeply personal expression which is his and to a concrete realization of his theoretical concepts of form.*



*Unpublished letter from Mondrian, New York, 1943.*





353 East 56 St.

May 24

Dear Mr. Pomeroy,

To complete our conversation, the following could be useful to you work.

You know that the intention of Cubism - in any case in the beginning - was to express volume. The three-dimensional space (natural) remained thus established. This was opposed to my conception of abstraction which is that this space just has to be destroyed. In consequence I came to destroy volume using the plane. Then the problem was to destroy the plane also. This I did by means of lines cutting the planes. But still the plane remained too much in fact.

So I came to make only lines and brought the color in there. Now the only problem is to destroy these lines also through <sup>mutual</sup> opposition.

Perhaps I express my self not clear in this but it can explain you why I left the cubist influence - to exist from modernism.

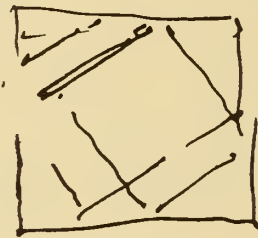
\* It shows again that Cubism was found "remained" natural and was only an abstraction but not abstract.

I think the destruction of the three-dimensional space is the main thing.

Many appreciate in my  
former work <sup>just</sup> what I did  
not want to express but  
established by incapacity  
to express what I wanted;  
dynamic movement in  
equilibrium -  
Continuous struggle for this  
brought me nearer.

In his later works Daesbury tried  
to destroy static expression by  
diagonal position of his lines -

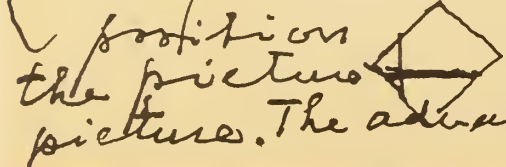
But in this way  
the feeling of phytic  
equilibrium which  
is necessary to enjoy  
a work of art is lost.



Relationship with architecture,  
of vertical and horizontal position,  
is broken -

The picture,

hung in this



only the limitation of  
lines of 45° not the  
picture. The advantage is the longer lines in  
this way produced.

Important to discern two  
sorts of equilibrium:

1 static balance -

2 dynamic equilibrium -

For this reason it is under-  
standable that some oppose  
against equilibrium in art,  
some others defend it.

The great struggle for artists  
is to annihilate static equi-  
librium in the way of conti-  
nuous opposition of the  
means of expression.

It is always in human's na-  
ture to love static balance.  
This (of course balance) is  
necessary to existence in  
time -  
But vitality in the <sup>continue</sup> succession  
of time destroys always this  
balance (or <sup>conscious</sup> expression of this vitality.  
(Art is <sup>abstract</sup>)

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## **PAINTINGS**

**TREE IN LANDSCAPE.** Circa 1905. Oil on canvas,  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
*Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**DYING CHRYSANTHEMUM.** 1907-08. Oil on canvas,  $33\frac{1}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**THE RED CLOUD.** 1907-08. Oil on board mounted on wood,  $25\frac{1}{4} \times 29\frac{5}{8}$ ".  
*Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**WINDMILL IN SUNLIGHT.** 1908. Oil on canvas,  $44\frac{7}{8} \times 34\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**DUNE.** Circa 1909. Oil on cardboard,  $13 \times 18\frac{1}{8}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**DUNE.** 1909-10. Oil on cardboard,  $11\frac{5}{8} \times 15\frac{3}{8}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**DUNE.** Circa 1909. Oil on canvas,  $14\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**THE RED TREE.** 1910. Oil on canvas,  $27\frac{5}{8} \times 39$ ".  
*Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**CALLA LILIES.** 1910. Oil on canvas,  $19\frac{3}{4} \times 13\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**MILL NEAR DOMBURG.** 1910. Oil on canvas,  $59\frac{1}{8} \times 33\frac{7}{8}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**NUDE.** Circa 1911. Oil on canvas,  $55\frac{1}{8} \times 38\frac{5}{8}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**LANDSCAPE.** Circa 1911. Oil on canvas,  $24\frac{7}{8} \times 30\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**LANDSCAPE WITH TREES.** Circa 1911. Oil on canvas,  $47\frac{1}{2} \times 39\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*

**STILL LIFE WITH GINGERPOT, II.** 1911. Oil on canvas,  $36\frac{1}{8} \times 47\frac{1}{4}$ ".  
*Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.*



**THE GREY TREE.** Circa 1911. Oil on canvas,  $30\frac{7}{8} \times 42\frac{3}{8}$ ".  
Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**APPLE TREE IN BLOSSOM.** Circa 1911. Oil on canvas,  $30\frac{3}{4} \times 41\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**COMPOSITION: TREES.** 1911. Oil on canvas,  $38\frac{5}{8} \times 25\frac{5}{8}$ ".  
Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**COMPOSITION No. 3, TREES.** Oil on canvas,  $37\frac{1}{2} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**EUCALYPTUS TREE IN GREY AND TAN.** 1912. Oil on canvas,  $31\frac{3}{4} \times 25\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
Collection Sidney Janis, New York.

**COMPOSITION 7.** 1913. Oil on canvas,  $41\frac{7}{8} \times 45$ ".  
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

**COMPOSITION No. 6.** 1914. Oil on canvas,  $34\frac{5}{8} \times 24$ ".  
Collection S. B. Slijper, courtesy Stedelijk van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven.

**COMPOSITION 3.** 1914. Oil on canvas,  $37\frac{1}{4} \times 21\frac{7}{8}$ ".  
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

**FACADE 5.** 1914. Oil on canvas,  $22 \times 33\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
Collection Sidney Janis, New York.

**COMPOSITION.** 1916. Oil on canvas and wood strip,  $47\frac{1}{4} \times 29\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

**COMPOSITION WITH LINES (PLUS-MINUS).** 1917. Oil on canvas,  $42\frac{1}{2} \times 42\frac{1}{2}$ ".  
Collection Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.

**LOZENGE WITH GREY LINES.** 1918. Oil on canvas,  $47\frac{5}{8}$ " diagonal.  
Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**COMPOSITION: BRIGHT COLOR PLANES WITH GREY LINES.**  
1919. Oil on canvas,  $35\frac{1}{4}$ " diagonal.  
Collection Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.

**COMPOSITION. CHECKERBOARD, LIGHT COLORS.**  
1919. Oil on canvas,  $33\frac{7}{8} \times 41\frac{3}{4}$ ".  
Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**COMPOSITION. CHECKERBOARD, DARK COLORS.**

1919. Oil on canvas,  $33\frac{1}{8} \times 40\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**COMPOSITION IN GREY, BLUE, YELLOW AND RED.**

1921. Oil on canvas,  $19\frac{7}{8} \times 15\frac{7}{8}$ ".

Lent anonymously.

**COMPOSITION WITH YELLOW LINES.** 1933. Oil on canvas,  $52\frac{3}{8}$ " diagonal.

Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**RED CORNER.** 1938. Oil on canvas,  $58\frac{3}{4}$ " diagonal.

Lent anonymously.

**COMPOSITION.** 1939-42. Oil on canvas,  $35\frac{1}{4} \times 31\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Lent anonymously.

**DRAWINGS**

**SEATED GIRL.** Circa 1904. Charcoal,  $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell S. McKnight, Scarsdale, New York.

**LIGHTHOUSE AT WESTKAPELLE.** Circa 1909. Ink,  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{5}{8}$ ".

Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**SELF-PORTRAIT.** 1910-11. Charcoal,  $19\frac{1}{2} \times 29$ ".

Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**TREE.** 1910-11. Charcoal,  $22\frac{1}{2} \times 33\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Collection Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**OVAL CUBIST COMPOSITION.** 1911-12. Charcoal,  $33\frac{1}{2} \times 27\frac{5}{8}$ ".

Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

**CATHEDRAL.** 1914. Charcoal,  $19\frac{1}{8} \times 28\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Matter, New York.

**PIER AND OCEAN.** 1914. Charcoal,  $19\frac{3}{4} \times 24\frac{7}{8}$ ".

Collection S. B. Slijper, Gemeente Museum, The Hague.

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*James Johnson Sweeney, Director*



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*The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. 7 East 72nd Street, New York 21, N. Y.*